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# PRESS RELEASE

## USAID ANNOUNCES LOCAL GOVERNMENT INITIATIVE

Astana, April 7, 2010 – Pamela Spratlen, the Deputy Chief of Mission at the U.S. Embassy in Kazakhstan, officially launched an exciting new program, called the Local Development Initiative, which is a three-year project aimed at helping local governments enhance their governance capacity, service delivery, and collaboration with constituents. The project, supported by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), was rolled out at a conference on Wednesday, April 7, at the Conference Hall of the Imperia G Hotel in Astana (Abay Ave. 63), at 16:00-18:00.

"We look forward to supporting the work of the local government bodies in Kazakhstan through USAID's Local Development Initiative, improving the delivery of services to citizens, as well as promoting more effective communication between citizens and their local government entities," said DCM Spratlen, speaking to local government and ministry officials, Parliament deputies, specialists from the Institute of Parliamentarism, as well as representatives of international organizations that attended the project opening conference.

Over the course of the next three years, the project will support implementation of the law "On local governance and local self-governance in the Republic of Kazakhstan" and provide training to Maslikhat deputies and local government officials on their roles and responsibilities in local governance, budget preparation and implementation, service delivery, and other key local government functions. The Local Development Initiative will also assist district Akimat and Maslikhat officials in preparation of strategic development and service delivery plans through public participation that are linked to local government budgets. Starting October 2010, the Local Development Initiative will provide grants for local governments to finance small-scale infrastructure projects selected by the communities.

USAID's Local Development Initiative will be implemented in Tole Bi Ordabasy districts of South Kazakhstan Province, Semei District of East Kazakhstan Province, Karasai District of Almaty Province, and Kyzylorda District. In each of these districts, the project will partner with akimats of three selskyi okrugs (village areas).

USAID's Local Development Initiative is implemented by Cardno Emerging Markets USA, Ltd. In addition to Kazakhstan, this project will also work in Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan.

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**USAID (the U.S. Agency for International Development)** is a leading U.S. Government agency that provides economic and social assistance on behalf of American people worldwide. Since 1992, the American people through USAID have provided more than \$550 million in programs that support Kazakhstan's democratic institutions, social sector, and economic growth.